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Application of the literary text as a starting point in the integrative approach in teaching in the first cycle of primary education²

Extended summary

An integrative approach to learning is based on connecting knowledge from different fields into a unique system. In this way, students acquire functional knowledge that is applicable in everyday life. One of the ways to achieve this in teaching is provided by literary texts. Their structure in terms of meaning includes numerous topics that involve life itself. Both in the professional and scientific literature, there are numerous examples that show how the integrative connection of different school subjects can be achieved by means of a literary text. For this reason, the paper examines the extent to which literary texts are used in teaching in the first cycle of primary education with this function and how teachers assess their methodological competence for their application. The research was conducted in the Republic of Serbia during 2021 and 2022 on a sample of 225 primary school teachers in order to determine the following: 1. whether teachers use the literary text as a starting point for an integrative approach in teaching; 2. how teachers assess their methodological competence during institutionalized education for the application of literary texts as a starting point in the integrative approach; 3. whether teachers improved methodologically in the application of the literary text as a starting point in the integrative approach and, if so, in what ways did they do it; 4. how teachers evaluate their methodological competence for the application of the literary text in this function. The descriptive method and surveying technique were applied in the research, and a survey questionnaire was constructed as an instrument. The obtained data were processed in the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The results of the research show that 38.2% of the surveyed pri-

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mary school teachers regularly use a literary text as a starting point in the integrative approach, and 57.3% of the surveyed teachers do so occasionally. As far as the biggest difficulty in implementation is concerned, teachers perceive the preparation of such a lesson, which requires their greater engagement (68.0%). When it comes to assessing the methodological competence for the application of a literary text as a starting point in the integrative approach during institutionalized education, only 5.3% of the surveyed teachers share the opinion that during their professional training they did not acquire the methodological knowledge about the application of a literary text as a starting point in the integrative approach; 44.42% assess themselves as methodologically qualified, and 50.2% as partially qualified. The largest number of the respondents (92.4%) had the opportunity to expand their methodological knowledge of integration through the application of literary texts and, most often, by attending seminars (56.4%). A considerable number also did so by reading professional or scientific literature or from colleagues who share their experiences, but none of the respondents took advantage of the opportunity to add some other form of professional development in addition to the ones offered, where they expanded their knowledge of integration through a literary text. This indicates the need to investigate and encourage the presence of integrative topics both in seminars and in other forms of organized teacher training. The majority of the respondents (53.8%) believe that they are competent enough to use a literary text as a starting point in the integrative approach in teaching, 36.4% express the need for additional training, and only 9.8% state that they are insufficiently competent in this area. The presented results on the application of literary texts as a starting point in the integrative approach in teaching in the first cycle of primary education are mostly positive, because only 4.4% of teachers did not use a literary text with that function in teaching. In addition, more than a half of the respondents (53.8%) perceive themselves as sufficiently competent in application, and the percentage of those (92.4%) who have received additional training in this area is extremely high. What attracts attention is the result that 50.2% of the respondents estimate that during the institutionalized education they partially acquired the methodological knowledge that enables them to apply the literary text. Such a result justifies the need to enrich the methodological subjects at teacher education and pedagogical faculties with the content on integration, and especially with content that includes different aspects of the application of the literary text as a starting point in the integrative approach. The results of the research imply the need for additional research in order to determine in what way and which literary texts teachers use in this function, which subjects they associate with them, with what purpose they do it and what results they achieve. Also, one of the implications of this research is the already highlighted need for different forms of teacher training in this area.

Keywords: integrative approach, Serbian language, Serbian language teaching methodology, literary text, primary school teacher

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